1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these reverences are merely sketched out. In the *dé-ong* too will be kept the chests containing spare clothes and jewels. 342

With the exception of the altar, and of a couple of the biggest houses (those of Tafoor and Chala Mandal) which have rough coloured frescoes on the external plaster and slightly carved doorways and windows, Lepcha houses are entirely unornamented within and without. As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas possess neither arts nor crafts, though they show considerable dexterity in adapting natural materials to domestic uses. Lepchas are capable of becoming very efficient craftsmen; the locally done carpentry work in the monastery is as good as could be desired; but such useless decoration is for them entirely pointless, an alien craft to be learned from aliens at the command and expense of the state. Datoop, a master carpenter, who had studied the craft for nine years and who had done the fine work in most of the monasteries of the neighbourhood, had not a single piece of carved wood in his house. 353 [463]

Painting is an even more alien art, confined exclusively to specially trained lamas. The only painter in the neighbourhood was the Lharibu (painter) Chujen of Panung, the father-in-law of Tafoor, and he had had to give up the practice of the craft with increasing years and failing eyesight. He started with a natural propensity for drawing, which was noted by his lamaist instructor, who advised him to learn to become a painter. He studied for nine years at the monastery of Pensong. The method of instruction was the following. The pupils were provided with a piece of oiled wood covered with black earth, on which was placed a thin layer of white powder; when this was scratched with a pointed stick a black outline drawing resulted, which could be wiped out so that the board could be used again. The teacher would draw a model and the pupils would copy that for some days, only going on to the next model when the first was copied perfectly. Thus the first five or six days were occupied with the head of the God Chum-den-dé; then nine or ten days were occupied in learning to draw this God's body naked; then the body draped; and finally the whole figure coloured. In this mechanical way a whole repertoire of sacred pictures were learned during the nine years' teaching, and the Lharibu later learned others by copying existing models. 532 ● 874

According to the Lharibu's view of art, all pictures are approximations to a divine original, varying in merit chiefly by their nearness to this ideal, but also partly through the fineness and 532

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

detail of the work. He disapproves of the habit which some painters have of adding novelties or original motives to the work. His view of his art is entirely mechanical and he knows little of a painter's technique. He practically only uses bought colours, and though he knows that a paint can be lightened by the addition of chalk, he does not know how to darken colours or how to mix his own colours. It is worth noting that before he started to learn to paint he occasionally drew people and birds for his own amusement, but that after he had been taught he never drew a line for the pleasure of it, but only when required to do so. His own house is completely undecorated.

All lamas acquire considerable dexterity in the fashioning of impermanent sacrificial objects for different ceremonies; these are made at great speed, with astounding agility and deftness. The most complicated objects are the *deu*, or house of supernaturals, which consist of varied and elaborate geometrical designs in various coloured thread twisted round bamboo splinters, and fastened on to a single bamboo upright. Models of different supernaturals, of a more or less life-like appearance, are made out of the flour of different grains mixed with water to form a paste, or out of mud, and are decorated with butter, plain or dyed to different colours, various coloured wools and pieces of thread and cloth. The Mun decorate their sacrifical objects far less, but they occasionally use containers of green bamboo, on the outside of which elaborate geometrical designs are quickly and accurately scratched with the point of a knife.

The knife is practically the Lepcha's only instrument. The knives are of iron with a wooden handle and a blade about eighteen inches long and three inches wide; the whole of one side is a cutting edge and the tip is square, not pointed. These knives are now bought from traders in Mangan or Gangtok; formerly they were got from Tibetans in exchange for produce. As soon as a boy achieves physical independence he is given a small knife of his own, and, except in the case of lamas when they are officiating, you can never see a Lepcha outside his house without his knife in a one-sided bamboo scabbard slung by his side. This knife is used for every conceivable purpose, from lopping trees on land about to be cultivated, to cutting up meat or wood for any domestic or agricultural task. Except for a couple of hatchets, which are loaned about the village when big trees have to be cut down, and short hoes for terracing, these knives are the universal instrument for every purpose. Girls

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Quarrelling is caused by a trinity of three devils Soo-*moong* (enmity of speech), Gé-*moong* (enmity of thought) and Thor-*moong* (enmity of action). To prevent quarrelling this trinity Soo-gé-thor is symbolically destroyed once a year in the monastery in the month of November; the ceremony is called *Thorsu*; every person of the village should be present; those who are unable to come should send gifts and crops instead.

First of all a very large image of the supernatural Thorgyop *rum* is made and at the four corners are placed containers, one filled with blood mixed with poison, one with milk, and two with *chi*. Somewhat in front of this is made a smaller image of Soo-gé-thor and in front of that is an unshaped heap of earth (the other images are also made of mud) with an egg on top so arranged that the egg is opposite the demon's heart. The demon is three-sided with images made of butter impressed with a wooden printing block[7] on each side. By the egg stands an archer with a bow and arrow ready. First of all the god is invoked and when he is considered to be present the lama says in Tibetan ' we are giving your life into the hands of a cruel man '. After this the devil is invoked and when it is thought to be present in the image the archer will shoot an arrow in such a way that it pierces simultaneously the egg and the heart. This is repeated three times with different eggs.

Another image is made of Soo-gé-thor, this time recumbent and with open mouth and arms. He is summoned from wherever he may be, whether he is in the skies or on the earth or under the earth; when the devil has entered the image it is hacked into small pieces and offered to the god mixed with poison and blood; then these pieces together with pieces of paper inscribed with the devil's name are rammed into a hollow bamboo which is covered with a thick cloth and put among the firewood under an iron griddle and set fire to. After this the lamas again read from the scriptures.

Finally a third image called Sor-so-mu is made; this is a three-sided pointed lump of mud smeared with blood and stamped on each side in butter with the name of the devils and their effigy. The lama after long prayers holds this pyramid above his head and throws it forward; the direction that the pointed end turns to

[7] A number of engraved blocks with representations of different supernaturals are kept in the monastery for use as circumstances require. The most generally employed is the *lo-kor*, the representations of the patron supernaturals of the twelve year ' animal ' cycle.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY III

Above: Mamoo *moong* in detail; she is made of buckwheat flour decorated with butter. Note small kite-shaped *deu*, inscribed labels, *nahleut* at the base.

Below: The lamas invoke Mamoo *moong*. Right on the left is a *chaţé* table with bowls of water and rice for the gods' refreshment; seated on the left is the second Dorjé Lapoon fingering his rosary; on a cloth in front of him his sacred bell and brass *dorjé* or thunderbolt. Tafoor, who made the nine-storey palace is playing the cymbals. On the right, half out of the picture is lame Satéo, ready to strike the gong. Note the *patyoot* of *chi*.

[facing p. 228]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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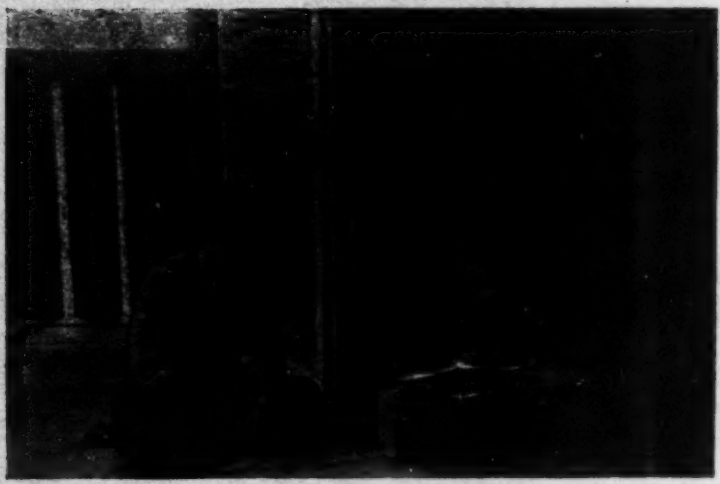

[532]

CHANO CONSULTS TAFOOR ABOUT HIS WIFE'S ILLNESS

Above: Tafoor casts a horoscope in the monastery porch.

Below: The devils to be exorcised. Deut *moong*, Mamoo *moong*, Lho *moong*. They are about 25 cms. high, made out of coloured buckwheat powder on stands of banana stem.

[facing p. 472]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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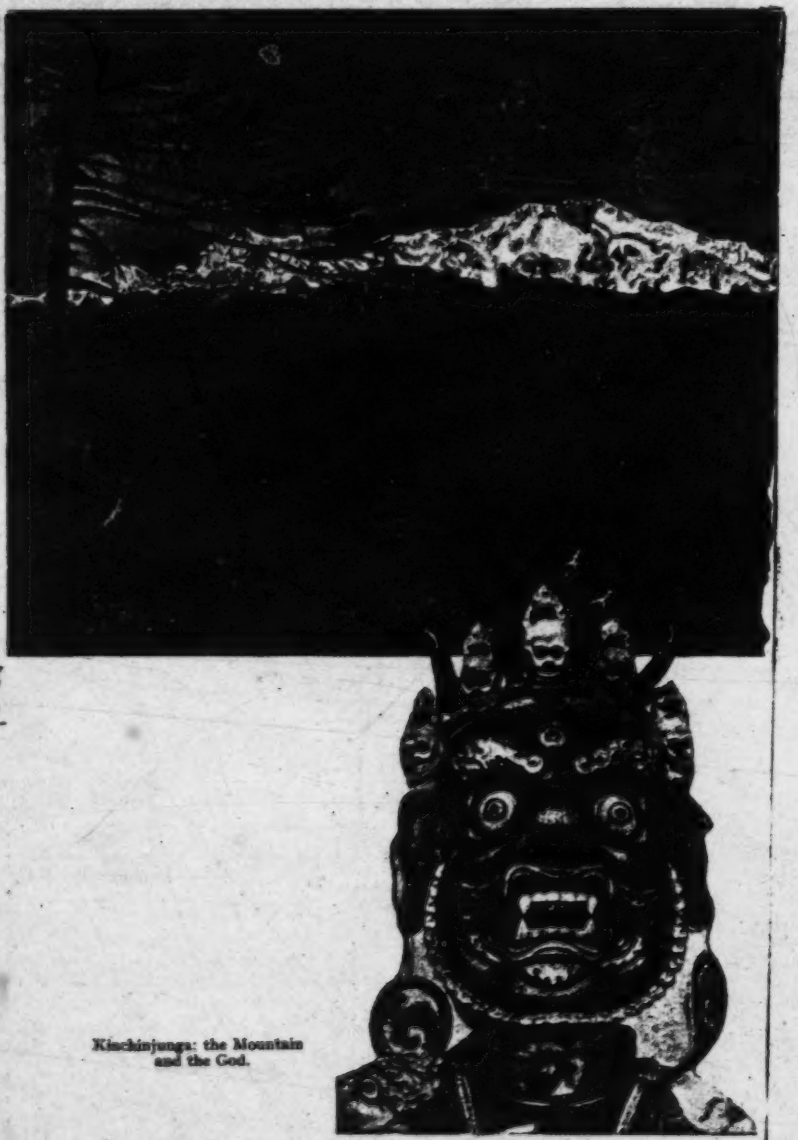

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Kinchinjunga: the Mountain and the God.

[frontispiece]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number. It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, complete with images and books. There were also several fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen, which were used for dances. This room was used as a general store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks' feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pantomime. It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep, was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare-footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-bowls with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its solitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to exclude every particle of light. From time to time one

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

became the monastery of that name. He is also believed to have founded shrines at Tashiding, Pemiongchi, and Sang-na-ch'o-ling; but others assert that Tashiding was first occupied by the Na-dak-pa Lama.

Lha-tsun is usually represented as seated on a leopard-skin mat with the right leg hanging down and his body almost bare, one of his titles being He-ru-ka-pa, which means unclad. His complexion is of a dark blue hue; but he is otherwise somewhat like his prototype, the Guru Rimpoche. A chaplet of skulls encircles his brow; and in his left hand is a skull-cup filled with blood, and a trident topped with human heads rests in front of the left shoulder. The right hand is in the traditional teaching attitude.

He is believed to be the incarnation of the great Indian teacher Bhima Mitra: and he himself is held to have been subsequently incarnated twice as a Sikkim Lama, the last reincarnation being Jigmi Pa-wo, who was born at Ok-ja-ling, near Sakya, who built the present monastery at Pemiongchi.

The place and manner of his death are apparently unknown; but he is currently reported to have died in Sikkim of fever contracted while on a visit to India. The dark livid hue of his skin is said to be due to his death from a malignant fever. His chief object in visiting India was, according to a popular saying, to obtain a rare variety of ruddy leopard-skin, such as is highly prized by Hindu ascetics as a mat.

All his clothing and personal effects are carefully treasured in Sikkim and worshipped as most sacred relics. They were stored at Pemiongchi monastery until the time of the Gurkha invasion in the last century, when, for greater safety, most of them were taken to the remote Talung monastery.

At Pemiongchi one complete set of his full-dress robes is kept, including hat and boots, hand-drum, bell, *dorje*, and a miraculous *purbu*, or dagger for stabbing the demons. These objects are only shown on special occasions to wealthy worshippers, and they are highly celebrated as a certain cure for barrenness. Couples thus afflicted, and who can afford

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 531 874 but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

● 532 792 Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

159 622 775 I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun, [764] and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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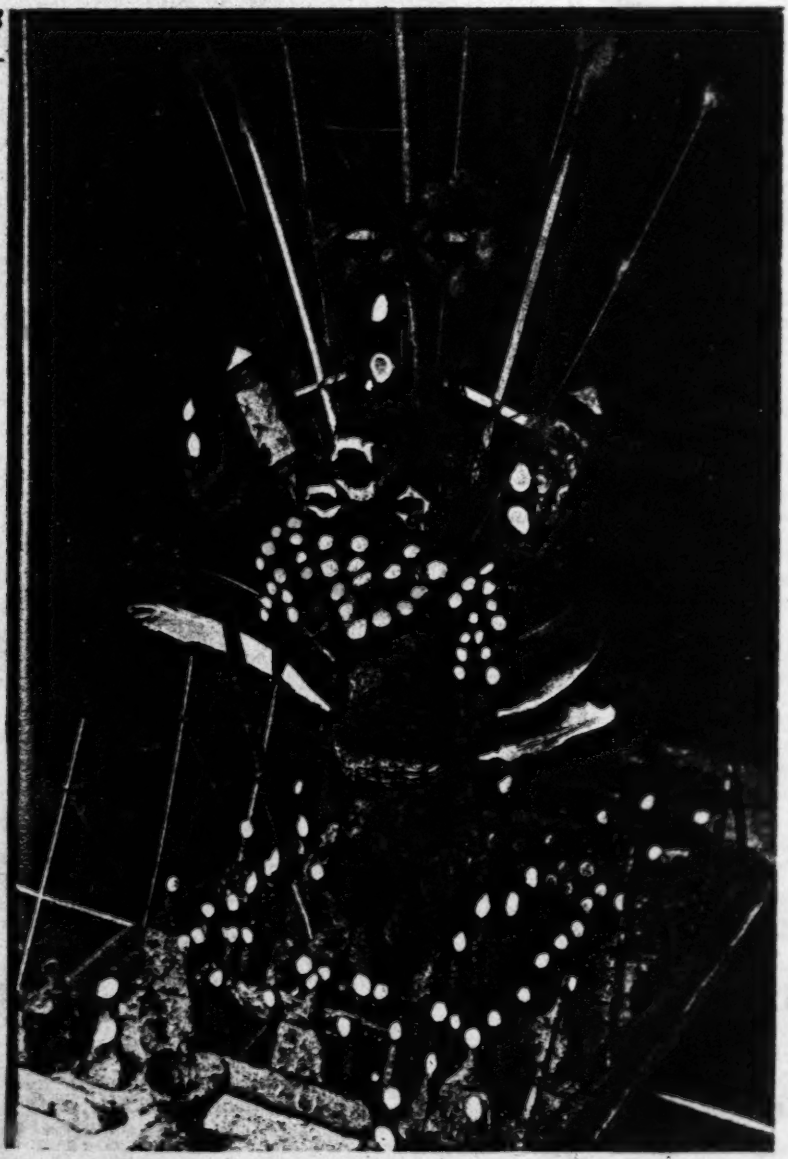

A completed *Go-sum*.

[Facing p. 130]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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Masked Lama dressed to represent the god Kuvera, the embodiment of Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p. 275]